

1 1. A system for detecting an observing program on a computer system, the system  
2 comprising:

3       accessing instructions that access observer data, the observer data including  
4             data descriptive of an observer program, the observer program being  
5             programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and  
6             also operating to create data from the observing of the observer  
7             program;

8       reading instructions that read memory of the computer system to obtain  
9             memory data;

10       comparing instructions that compare the observer data with memory data read  
11            in from memory to determine whether the observer program is present  
12            on the computer system;

13       generating instructions that generate results from the comparing, wherein the  
14            results generated indicate whether the observer program is present on  
15            the computer system; and

16       outputting instructions that obtain the results and provide the results for a  
17            user.

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19 2. The system of claim 1 wherein the reading instructions read the memory of the  
20       computer system by querying the operating system of the computer system  
21       for the tasks running and by examining task information provided by the  
22       operating system.

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2 3. The system of claim 1 wherein the outputting instructions provide the results to a  
3 user through a graphical user interface.  
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5 4. The system of claim 1 wherein the reading instructions read the memory of the  
6 computer system by querying the file system of the computer system for the  
7 files located on storage media and by examining file information provided by  
8 the file system.  
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10 5. The system of claim 1 wherein the reading instructions read the memory of the  
11 computer system by opening a file located on storage media and by  
12 examining contents of the file.  
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14 6. The system of claim 1 wherein the observer data includes data descriptive of a  
15 plurality of observer programs and wherein the system compares the observer  
16 data with the memory data to determine whether any known observer  
17 program is present.  
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19 7. The system of claim 1 further comprising countermeasure instructions wherein the  
20 countermeasure instructions alter the operation of the observer program.  
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1 8. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the  
2 operation of the observer program by altering observer program configuration  
3 data.

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5 9. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the  
6 operation of the observer program by altering a file on the computer system.

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8 10. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the  
9 operation of the observer program by altering reporting data generated by the  
10 observer program.

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12 11. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the  
13 operation of the observer program by replacing reporting data generated by  
14 the observer program.

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16 12. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the  
17 operation of the observer program by replacing a file of the observer program.

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19 13. The system of claim 1 wherein the observer data includes data descriptive of  
20 observing activity typical of observing programs and wherein the system  
21 compares the observer data with the memory data to determine whether any  
22 known observer program is present.

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2 14. The system of claim 1 further comprising the observer data, wherein the  
3 observer data includes a list of files and modules that are part of the observer  
4 program software, and wherein the reading instructions read the memory of  
5 the computer system by querying the operating system of the computer  
6 system for the tasks running and by examining task information provided by  
7 the operating system, and wherein the reading instructions also read the  
8 memory of the computer system by querying the file system of the computer  
9 system for the files located on storage media and by examining file  
10 information provided by the file system, and wherein the outputting  
11 instructions provide the results to a user through a graphical user interface.  
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13 15. The system of claim 1 wherein the system is made available over a computer  
14 network through a web site.  
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1 16. A system for detecting an observing program on a computer system, the system  
2 comprising:

3 means for accessing observer data, the observer data including data  
4 descriptive of an observer program, the observer program being  
5 programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and  
6 also operating to create data from the observing of the observer  
7 program;

8 means for reading memory of the computer system to obtain memory data;

9 means for comparing the observer data with memory data to determine  
10 whether the observer program is present on the computer system;

11 means for generating results from the comparison, wherein the results  
12 generated indicate whether the observer program is present on the  
13 computer system; and

14 means for outputting the results for a user.  
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1 17. A method for detecting an observing program on a computer system, the  
2 method comprising the steps of:

3       accessing observer data, the observer data including data descriptive of an  
4               observer program, the observer program being programmed to observe  
5               a user's activities on the computer system and also operating to create  
6               data from the observing of the observer program;

7       reading memory of the computer system to obtain memory data;

8       comparing the observer data with memory data read in from memory to  
9               determine whether the observer program is present on the computer  
10              system;

11       generating results from the reading and comparing, wherein the results  
12              generated indicate whether the observer program is present on the  
13              computer system; and

14       outputting the results for a user.

1 18. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for detecting an observing  
2 program on a computer system, wherein the instructions comprise executable  
3 instructions for implementing a method comprised of the steps of:

4       accessing observer data, the observer data including data descriptive of an  
5       observer program, the observer program being programmed to observe  
6       a user's activities on the computer system and also operating to create  
7       data from the observing of the observer program;

8       reading memory of the computer system to obtain memory data;

9       comparing the observer data with memory data read in from memory to  
10       determine whether the observer program is present on the computer  
11       system;

12       generating results from the reading and comparing, wherein the results  
13       generated indicate whether the observer program is present on the  
14       computer system; and

15       outputting the results for a user.

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17 19. The computer-readable medium of claim 18 wherein the computer-readable  
18 medium is a data transmission medium.

1 20. A system for altering the operation of an observer program on a computer  
2 system, the system comprising:

3       accessing instructions that access observer information, the observer

4               information including data descriptive of the observer program, the

5               observer program being programmed to observe a user's activities on

6               the computer system and also operating to create data from the

7               observing of the observer program;

8       reading instructions that read memory of the computer system to obtain files

9               relating to the observer program;

10      altering instructions that alter a file relating to the observer program such that

11              the operation of the observer program is changed.

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13 21. The system of claim 20 further comprising an observer detection program.

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15 22. The system of claim 20 further comprising inputting instructions that display to a  
16       user options regarding the altering and that take input from the user relating to  
17       the options.

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19 23. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of  
20       the observer program by altering observer program configuration data.

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22 24. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of  
23       the observer program by altering a file on the computer system.

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2 25. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of  
3 the observer program by altering reporting data generated by the observer  
4 program.

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6 26. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of  
7 the observer program by replacing reporting data generated by the observer  
8 program.

9  
10 27. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of  
11 the observer program by replacing a file of the observer program.

12  
13 28. The system of claim 20 wherein the system is made available over a computer  
14 network through a web site.

1 29. A system for altering the operation of an observer program on a computer  
2 system, the system comprising:

3 means for accessing observer information, the observer information including  
4 data descriptive of the observer program, the observer program being  
5 programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and  
6 also operating to create data from the observing of the observer  
7 program;

8 means for reading memory of the computer system to obtain files relating to  
9 the observer program; and

10 means for altering a file relating to the observer program such that the  
11 operation of the observer program is changed.

1 30. A method for altering the operation of an observer program on a computer  
2 system, the method comprising the steps of:

3       accessing observer information, the observer information including data

4               descriptive of the observer program, the observer program being

5               programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and

6               also operating to create data from the observing of the observer

7               program;

8       reading memory of the computer system to obtain files relating to the observer

9               program; and

10      altering a file relating to the observer program such that the operation of the

11              observer program is changed.

1 31. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for altering the operation of  
2 an observer program on a computer system, wherein the instructions comprise  
3 executable instructions for implementing a method comprised of the steps of:

4       accessing observer information, the observer information including data

5               descriptive of the observer program, the observer program being

6               programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and

7               also operating to create data from the observing of the observer

8               program;

9       reading memory of the computer system to obtain files relating to the observer

10              program; and

11       altering a file relating to the observer program such that the operation of the

12              observer program is changed.

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14 32. The computer-readable medium of claim 31 wherein the computer-readable  
15 medium is a data transmission medium.